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Exile and Expatriation

Introduction

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Introduction

Catherine Collomp and Isabelle Richet

1 The essays gathered in this issue offer new perspectives on transatlantic relations between Europe and the United States. They deal with specific, other than labor, forms of migration. Generally constrained by political forces, exile evokes a forced abandonment of one's homeland, while expatriation, on the contrary, indicates a chosen movement across borders, springing from a diversity of motives, be they economic, political, intellectual, cultural or personal.

2 Yet these two notions have more in common than is generally perceived. If always decided under constraint, exile also represents the choice of freedom over silence and oppression; on the other hand, expatriates often feel compelled to leave their country by a dissatisfaction with its dominant political or cultural order (Reagan Wilson, 1991; Loyer, 2009, 368). In addition, the two notions belong to the common semantic field of the circulation of people and ideas beyond the limits of the country of origin. They should be understood as a trajectory and a process leading to the construction of fluid and multiple identities (Groppo, 2003, 21). Their juxtaposition brings forth a blurring of the economic and political categories by which migration movements are generally studied. And dealing with smaller numbers than the labor migrations of the 19th and early 20th centuries, exile as well as expatriation studies often evolve around individual cases whose itineraries escape the broad categories of mass class identities, and the politics of integration and/or assimilation. Even though exiles, refugees and expatriates, like labor migrants, are also pushed or pulled by political or economic forces that sway their destinies, they are usually well endowed with cultural and social capital, which enhances their possibilities of mobility and enterprise.

3 These papers offer vistas on the United States as a place of arrival for European exiles, but also as a place of departure for Americans abroad. This multilateral approach provides new case studies which revise, complement or refine previous analyses on several aspects of American/European relations. In particular, they allow for a view of the United States not just as the land where immigrants were destined to fuse in the legendary melting-pot, but as a stop among others on the transatlantic circuit, a part of

the transnational space created by the "multinational flows of people, ideas and goods" (Iriye and Saunier, 2009).

4 The essays focus on a particular time span, the interwar years and World War II, a period that witnessed vast movements of people across the Atlantic, and they all try to grasp this diasporic experience in its specific historicity, i.e. in a context dominated by multiple struggles between dictatorship and democracy, oppression and liberty. It was also a period during which the United States did not always find it easy to adopt a principled position, as exemplified by its sympathy for the Mussolini régime and its reluctance to welcome the Jews fleeing German Nazism and Italian Fascism.

5 For obvious reasons, the Jewish experience of displacement figures prominently in these essays although the ethno-racial dimension of the Jewish exile was often combined with intellectual and/or political motivations. Concerning the question of American attitudes to the admission of refugees during the Nazi years, the authors are well aware of the historiography on the specific political, economic and administrative conditions which inhibited the United States from fully playing its traditional role as a land of refuge at a time when it would have been most necessary (Wyman 1968; 1984; Breitman and Kraut, 1987; Feingold, 1995). They are also well aware of the vast literature on the significance of the intellectual migration that took place "above the quotas," allowing the presence of a European elite in the US and thus creating the possibilities of cultural transfers and hybridization (Fleming and Bailyn, 1969; Hughes, 1975; Krohn, 1993; Timms and Hughes, 2003). The papers presented here do not reverse these accepted paradigms but offer new perspectives to apprehend the general panorama. As a counterpoint, two essays in this collection explore the Eastward migration of Americans who had chosen Europe as a place for living or doing business in the 1920's and 1930's. During World War II and in its aftermath, on the other hand, American presence or interventions in Europe were crucial for the survival and the reconstruction of Jewish lives. Two papers explore the humanitarian role of American Jewish institutions active in Europe (Poland and France) to bring relief or support to the beleaguered Jewish populations.

6 With this multilateral approach, a more circular picture of transnational relations emerges than is generally perceived. Far from being one-dimensional, it offers multiple places of focus, and highlights the transnational space that was being constructed in the process.

7 In his rich essay on the historiography of exile studies Renato Camurri firmly calls for a re-politicization of the notion of exile. Re-centering the notion on its precise historic and political meaning, Camurri insists on the traumatic experience of exile in the specific context of the 20th century totalitarian regimes. The case of German Jews, intellectuals, and leftist activists, producing the most numerous flow of refugees to the United States, has been the most explored (Jay, 1985; Palmier, 1990; Heilbut, 1997; Krohn, 1993; Traverso, 2004), but comparisons are still necessary with other national contexts. Camurri thus delineates the less known characteristics of the Italian intellectual migration to America. A clear link can be established, he notes, between the enactment of the anti-Semitic racial laws of the Mussolini régime in 1938 and the rise of Italian entries in the United States, thus positing the case of the "racial" emigration of Italian intellectuals to the United States. In order to apprehend the complexity of the refugees' experience and divided identities, Camurri calls for multi-level analyses which should include the conditions of departure, the role of institutions, the building

of political, personal or associative networks, the causes affecting the degree of return or staying in the United States as well as the cultural or scientific legacy of exiles. In his attempt at conceptualization, Camurri borrows the vision of exile as essentially a traumatic and fragmented experience of loss, an absolute and irreparable break from which individuals seldom recovered, as expressed by Palestinian-American Edward Saïd (Saïd, 2001, 173-76).

Exile trajectories during the Nazi/fascist years: "Exit, Voice, Loyalty"

8 Yet, ever since the Romans, exile has also been identified with freedom, with a choice of liberty, "the ultimate gesture of independence and opposition" (Isabella, 2006, 495), "the choice to fight oppression from abroad" (Loyer, 2009, 368). It is such an understanding of exile that Jeremy Adelman illustrates in his fine essay on Albert O. Hirschman. By using Hirschman's own vocabulary, "Exit, Voice, Loyalty,"[1] Adelman applies these notions to describe his protagonist's choices. In itself, Hirschman's life, in his formative years, epitomized the struggle of a generation of anti-Nazi political activists in Western Europe. "Serially displaced" from Germany, France, Spain, Italy, where he had been politically involved in underground or military action against Nazi and fascist oppressors, Hirschman reached the United States in December 1940 having experienced a multiplicity of forced migrations and commitments because of his German Jewish and leftist identity.[2] In Hirschman's life, "exit"—rather than exile, a more static notion—was a dynamic form of action: he fled to exert "voice" against the fascist régimes and to act for democracy. Adelman strongly underlines that, seen in this light, exile (having to leave one's country) does not always engender a nostalgic situation of estrangement, "a fundamental rift between self and home," "a discontinuous state of being" as Edward Saïd has expressed it about his life in the United States (Said, 2001, 175-86).[3] Apparently Hirschman in the successive steps of his trajectory did not deplore loss or discontinuity, but took advantage of new opportunities to continue fighting. Never returning to his country of origin, Hirschman, who passed away in December 2012, became an economist of world-wide reputation.[4]

9 The case of Ana Foa Yona, an Italian Jewish antifascist, studied by Stefano Luconi, also brings light to the history of those who "opted out," who emigrated to the United States and maintained their fight from abroad. Anna Foa Yona's visceral hatred of the fascist régime predated the Mussolini 1938 racial laws. These however forced her and her family to emigrate if only because of their impact on their economic situation. With this example Luconi remarks that the line was thin between political and economic emigration. The decision to seek refuge in the US was taken under both political and economic stimuli. And once in the United States, political activity, when possible, had to be combined with the primary necessity to make ends meet for a family—the gender element in this struggle being another obstacle to overcome. For the middle classes, emigration often resulted in downward mobility. Even though surviving became their main concern, Anna managed to "voice" her antifascist belief, in her contributions she fought for the large political perspective of Italian liberation, but also had to counteract the lingering impact of the pro-Mussolini stance among a majority of Italian-Americans as well as the strong anti-Semitic feelings she encountered there. As an example of the

transformation of identities occurring in exile conditions, Ana Foa Yona who came from a highly assimilated Italian Jewish family, became increasingly aware of her being Jewish during her stay in the United States.

10 Another variation on the theme of exile or expatriation and transnational relationships is presented by Florian Michel with a study on Yves Simon. A disciple of Jacques Maritain, this French Catholic philosopher rarely appears in recollections on French émigrés. Invited by the University of Notre Dame (IN) in 1938, he remained there throughout the war. Later, accepting a position at the University of Chicago, he served as an exponent of Catholic thought among American philosophers. Simon was an expatriate, but not an exile. He certainly did not resemble the majority of the French refugees during the war who longed to return and often manifested a conspicuous arrogance concerning things American (Loyer, 2005). Yves Simon on the contrary felt at home in America. His Tocquevillian democratic belief and anti-liberal tradition were more easily reconciled in the American environment than in the French one. Together with Maritain, and Paul Vignaux,[5] Simon was a link in the international exchange between American democratic thought and Catholic doctrinal tenets. The Americanization of his political stance, on the other hand, can be noted in his opposition to De Gaulle and the Free French, a steadfast position of the Roosevelt Administration.

American Expatriates in Europe

11 Nancy Green's paper breaks new ground in the history of transatlantic migrations. By looking at the Eastward journey of Americans in Paris in the first decades of the 20th century, she studies a migratory trend that is contrary to American immigration history. It is also socially different from the predominantly labor composition of the migratory movements of the period. By bringing to light the community of American businessmen, entrepreneurs and industrialists who lived on the Paris "right bank," she reveals that there existed a lesser-known but much larger American community than that of the well-known bohemian writers and artists who lived on the "left bank." Expatriates rather than immigrants, these men's and women's presence resulted from a particular form of "exit and voice." Opening up a new frontier for American capitalism, they chose to develop American commercial opportunities by establishing themselves abroad. This group was a "precocious transnational élite" whose presence has been neglected in both American and French history.

12 Isabelle Richet prolongs this approach on the migration of Americans abroad by focusing on those who lived in Italy during the fascist years. Here again, most of these men and women belonged to the upper class, but a variety of family trajectories, social origins and professional pursuits diversified them while also creating differences in their attitudes to the fascist régime. In this paper Richet establishes a typology of attitudes and reactions to fascism ranging from active pro-fascist to active anti-fascist, with intermediary passive pro and anti categories. The portraits she draws weave together unexpected fragments of American and Italian history while enriching previous visions of the US/Italy diplomatic and commercial relations during the two decades concerned (1923-43). George Nelson Page, for instance, the son of an old Virginia planter family, and of an aristocratic Italian mother, was definitely marked by the conservative features of his origins: as head of the propaganda radio programs of

the Mussolini régime he reached the top levels of the Italian power structure. Others had a more discreet attitude. Bernard Berenson, the internationally renowned art historian of Jewish origin, was a personal friend and protector of major antifascist activist Gaetano Salvemini, but, at the same time, his professional activity led him to deal with wealthy American art collectors who, like J.P. Morgan, financially supported the régime. Focusing on the transnational circulation of people and ideas, the paper draws attention to the social location of the expatriates, their international networks and connections with Italian society in order to make sense of the position they adopted vis-à-vis the Mussolini dictatorship.

Jewish American transnational organizations in Europe

13 If the United States was the major country of exile for Jewish Europeans from Nazi-dominated countries, at the same time, American Jewish organizations also played a major role in Europe to alleviate the plight of Jewish people. Two examples are given here. Laura Hobson Faure presents an aspect of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's philanthropic interventions in France. The largest of all Jewish American organizations, the Joint's impact in Europe and especially in France was considerable. And Catherine Collomp presents the case of the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC), a smaller organization whose scope of action was defined by specific transnational political relations established over time across the Atlantic by a previous generation of refugees.

14 Founded by Jewish immigrants, compelled to leave Tsarist Russia for the United States before World War I, the JLC was based on the political community of interests of Bundists across the Atlantic. The Bund—a political party devoted to the defense of Jewish workers and of an autonomous Yiddish culture - had become a major actor in interwar Polish political life. In the meantime, the Bundist exiles had become the leaders of the "Jewish labor movement" in the United States. The JLC's interventions were thus motivated by Jewish and political (labor) solidarity across the Atlantic. During World War II, the close contacts the JLC leaders had maintained with Polish Bundists were crucial for the organization of relief for Jewish refugees. And it is because the Bund remained a major political organization in the Warsaw Ghetto, that, at the darkest hour of the war, the JLC from New York was able to support the final insurrection of the ghetto (April 1943) by sending money for survival and weapons.

15 The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or Joint) also acted out of Jewish solidarity for survivors of the Holocaust during and after the War. Its action was more of a philanthropic nature than that of the JLC. Yet in the countries were it operated the Joint did not simply finance the organization of relief and assist local social workers, it also helped toward the creation of new and autonomous institutions. With the example of the Joint's interventions in France, Laura Hobson Faure analyzes the dynamic, if asymmetrical, nature of the encounter between the most important and professionalized American relief organization with French Jewish institutions working for the reconstruction of Jewish life. The relative degree of Americanization of French social practices that took place, she notes, was not the sign of unilateral authority, but the end result of a negotiated process that allowed for a certain cultural transfer and involved multiple parties, illustrating once more the multilateral process at work in these particular transatlantic exchanges.

16 Despite their specificities, which make it difficult to find a single unifying perspective, the cases presented here illustrate how exile and expatriation are a process through which cultures come into contact. Multi-level exchanges occur, social and cultural identities are altered and ideological and political positions are refashioned. Approaching the United States from this more global perspective opens up new fruitful areas for research and partakes of the internationalization of American history called for by a number of American historians (Bender, 2002; Thelen, 1999).

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NOTES

1. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970) was written long after Hirschman's war-time commitments and

movements. In this book, as an economist and political scientist, Albert Hirschman (1915-2012) did not literally describe exilic conditions but exposed the individual or collective choices people have to respond to situations they disagree with as consumers, employees, executives of firms, collectivities or eventually as citizens.

2. During the MacCarthy years, Hirschman was "displaced" again: from the United States to South America.

3. Both Hannah Arendt, and Theodor Adorno, contemporary to Albert Hirschman, underlined the « rupture » or the « damage » in their private lives (Arendt « We Refugees » 2007 [1943]; Adorno [1951] , Minima Moralia, *Reflections from Damaged Life*,1978).

4. Jeremy Adelman, *Worldly Philosopher. The Odyssey of Albert Hirschman*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 2013.

5. Paul Vignaux, a French medieval scholar and prominent member of the French Christian labor movement (CFTC) was also very active in New York during the war to create a rapprochement between the reformist sections of French labor and American trade unions.

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